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SUBJECT: INDIAN MEDIA COVERAGE ON PRESIDENT FORD'S REMARKS

REF: NEW DELHI 12705

BEGIN SUMMARY: INDIAN PRESS ON SUNDAY AND MONDAY CONTINUED TO CHURN OUT ANGRY EDITORIALS AGAINST PRESIDENT FORD'S REMARKS ON INDIA. RESENTFUL ATTITUDE ALSO MANIFESTED IN COVERAGE OF (1) MAHARASHTRA STATE ANTI-FASCIST CONFERENCE CALLING GOI "TO FREEZE FUNDS OF CIA IN INDIA" AND ITS CRITICISM OF VOA AND BBC "FOR BROADCASTING FALSE PROPAGANDA," (2) COMMUNICATIONS MINISTER S.D. SHARMA'S STATEMENT CRITICIZING WASHINGTON FOR THE ROLE IT "PLAYED IN THE NAME OF DEMOCRACY," (3) PETROLEUM MINISTER K.R. GANESH'S REMARKS THAT "AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS" WERE TRYING "TO DESTABILIZE" THE SITUATION IN INDIA, (4) PRESIDENT FORD'S PALO ALTO REPORTED STATEMENT THAT U.S. MIGHT "INTERVENE AGAIN" IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, AND (5) NEWS STORIES STRESSING UNGA HAS "REBUFFED" THE U.S. OVER VIET NAMS' ENTRY.ENDSUMMARY.

1. EDITORIAL COVERAGE IN CALCUTTA, WAS SHARP AND SARCASTIC. ANTI-U.S. PIECES APPEARED IN TWO LEADING ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS AND THREE BENGALI-LANGUAGE DAILIES, INCLUDING CPI OFFICIAL ORGAN KALANTAR. IN MADRAS, EDITORIAL REACTION WAS LIMITED AND SUBDUED, CONFINED TO THE MAIL AND THREE UNCLASSIFIED

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LANGUAGE PAPERS. DELHI'S INFLUENTIAL PAPERS IN HINDI,

URDU, AND PUNJABI LANGUAGES JOINED IN WIDESPREAD EDITORIAL
ATTACKS ON THE U.S.

2. THE IMPACT OF THESE EDITORIALS WAS MITIGATED BY THE
FACT THAT MANY LARGE-CIRCULATION AND INFLUENTIAL PAPERS,
LIKE THE INDIAN EXPRESS, TIMES OF INDIA, HINDU AND
STATESMAN, AND SEVERAL LANGUAGE- PAPERS HAVE NOT YET
COMMENTED ON THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS. MOST PAPERS SEEM
TO BE WAITING THE OUTCOME OF THE INDO-U.S. JOINT COMMISSION
MEETING.

3. COMMENT IN INDEPENDENT PAPERS UNIFORMLY DENOUNCED
THE PRESIDENT FOR INTERFERING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF
INDIA, TERMING HIS REMARKS "UNWARRANTED," BLATANT,"
"OBJECTIONABLE AND IMPERTINENT," "INDISCREET," AND "PURE
MISCHIEF."

4. SOME OBSERVERS COMMENTED ON THE FUNCTIONING OF
DEMOCRACY IN THE U.S., STRESSING THAT IT HAS NOW A
NON-ELECTED PRESIDENT WHO HAS HAD "NO COMPUNCTION IN
VETOING CONGRESS DECISIONS" (COMMENTARY ON THE STATE-
RUN ALL INDIA RADIO BY R.D. KWATRA, RESIDENT EDITOR,
INDIAN EXPRESS). THEY ALSO CRITICIZED WASHINGTON FOR
SUPPORTING DICTATORIAL REGIMES IN MANY PARTS OF THE
WORLD.

5. SPECULATION ON WHY THE PRESIDENT MADE THE REMARKS
HIGHLIGHTED TWO CONSIDERATIONS. SOME THOUGHT, AS DID THE AIR
COMMENTATOR, THAT THE STATEMENT WAS INTENDED "TO BE A KIND OF
GESTURE TO CHINA." OTHERS AGREED WITH THE FREE PRESS
JOURNAL, OF BOMBAY, THAT THE REMARKS HAD "PERHAPS TO DO WITH
INDIA'S ROLE" AT THE LIMA CONFERENCE AND UNGA SPECIAL
SESSION.SAXBE

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